

be reappointed. In any event, the law is there and I do not intend to discuss a law which is on the statutes as approved by this house. That is not my purpose.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): The hon. minister was agitated earlier this afternoon when questions were put to him about the plans of Devco. Let me refer again to the fact that the chairman, the president and other directors are to be appointed. They all cannot be reappointed, and I should like the minister to indicate what plans Devco has in respect of their own pensions?

[Translation]

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): To my knowledge, Mr. Chairman, no plan has been presented to us with regard to the pension of Devco senior officers.

[English]

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Chairman, could the minister satisfy his curiosity, having regard to the specific plans put forward by Devco in respect of these pensions?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): My curiosity for the time being is related to the miners and employees, not the president of Devco.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Apparently the minister has misunderstood my question. I wanted to know whether he had concerned himself with the plans of Devco in respect of providing alternative work for the miners to be replaced.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Yes, Devco is concerned in this regard, as the hon. member knows very well. Devco is trying to find new jobs for those who are likely to be laid off. I do not think Devco has laid anyone off without being sure in advance that a job was available. If there is no job, there is the pre-retirement plan which applies.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Chairman, is the minister personally aware of any proposal for the development of alternative industry in the area by Devco?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Not personally, no.

Item agreed to.

40. Payments to the Cape Breton Development Corporation in accordance with terms and conditions prescribed by the Governor in Council, in respect of the rationalization and operation of the McBean Mine in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, and to and in respect of former employees of Acadia

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Coal Company Limited, and to authorize Cape Breton Development Corporation to manage and operate the McBean Mine pursuant to the terms of an agreement between the Corporation and The Pictou County Research and Development Commission and Thorburn Mining Limited, \$930,000.

Item agreed to.

1. Administration, operation and maintenance, including Canada's fee for membership in the international commission on irrigation and drainage, \$17,887,200.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the minister would like to say something at this time to inform the committee as to the position of the government in respect of regional development, or does he suggest we simply have a debate on these estimates?

[Translation]

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Chairman, with regard to the estimates, we deal now with the aggregate of all the programs which were implemented and which the department under my leadership has inherited.

It is quite difficult for me at this time to make any comments or projections since these were already existing programs which the house is aware of, and which hon. members have already had the opportunity of discussing. When we study the new estimates the house will expect the minister, and rightly so, to give explanations and also to make projections so that it may know exactly in what direction the department is going.

At this time I shall try to give all the explanation I can about these estimates.

• (8:40 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Chairman, I must admit I am somewhat disappointed that the minister has decided not to make any statement to the committee, because it seems to me that we have been going now for far too long with very little by way of explanation as to what activity is at the moment taking place within the proposed new department or related to on-going programs which have now been placed under the responsibility of the minister.

It is close to half a year since the reorganization was announced by the government, and there was considerable discussion before that going back almost a year. We are on the verge of having in Ottawa a very important conference on the constitution. This will take place in a very few days. At the last such meeting one of the main points raised at the conference, originally by the premier of Nova